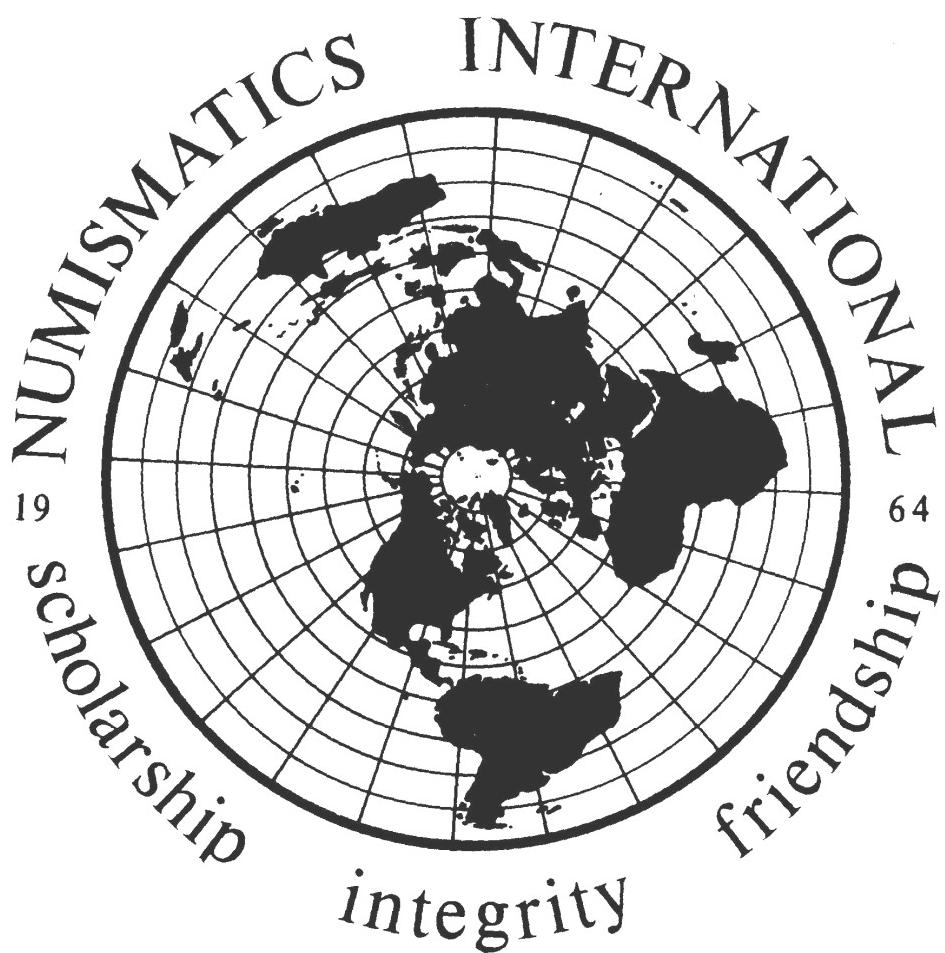


NI Bulletin

A Publication of Numismatics International Inc.

Volume 41 No. 2



February 2006
\$2.00

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OBJECTIVES OF NUMISMATICS INTERNATIONAL

Numismatics International is a non-profit educational organization. Its Objectives are: to encourage and promote the science of numismatics by specializing in areas and nations other than the United States of America; to cultivate fraternal relations among collectors and numismatic students; to encourage and assist new collectors; to foster the interest of youth in numismatics; to stimulate and advance affiliations among collectors and kindred organizations; and to acquire, share, and disseminate knowledge.

MEMBERSHIP FEES: Individual & Club Memberships, \$20.00 annually; Junior Membership (18 years of age and under), \$15.00 annually; Senior Membership (70 years of age and older), \$15.00 annually.

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NI

From the Editor's Desk

Among the articles in this edition of the Bulletin we have for you a work by David Guevara of Tierra del Fuego, Argentina, which shows that we will go to the ends of the earth to provide you, the reader, with quality numismatic articles. David and I have been in communication regarding publication of his article for about 2 years, and now here it is. Any translation errors fall to your editor. We also have articles from three NI members; I appreciate their submissions and hope you enjoy them.

Herman Blanton

NI

Additions and Corrections

To Volume 41 No. 1, January 2006.

The article "Another New Issue from the Cocos" on page 16 has a citation error referencing an earlier article on the Cocos. The correct reference is *NI Bulletin* Volume 40 No. 4, April 2005, page 73.

ISSN: 0197-3088 Copyright 2006
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Library Report

Thanks to the authors Carlos Jara M. & Alan Luedeking for their donation to the NI library.

Chile's Coquimbo Mint: A Documented History
Pub2003, 176pp, illus. #23 of 50.

James D. Haley, Book Librarian
Granvyl G. Hulse, Jr., Librarian, Emeritus



NI Educational Programs

ANA National Money Show at the Cobb Galleria Convention Centre at 2 Galleria Parkway, Atlanta, GA 30339, April 7, 8 & 9, 2006. The International Bank Note Society (IBNS) and the Numismatic Bibliomania Society (NBS) will share a club table with Numismatics International.

The International Bank Note Society (IBNS) general and educational meeting has been applied for at 11AM on Saturday, followed by the Numismatics International (NI) general and educational meeting at 12 Noon in the same room in the convention center. The plans for the Numismatic Bibliomania Society (NBS) meetings are still unknown at this time. Howard A. Daniel III will be manning the club table for all three organizations. All members, non-members and friends are invited to visit the club table and use it as their base for the conventions. Anyone who would like to volunteer to sit at the table, please contact Howard at HADANIEL3@MSN.Com.

Howard will also be the moderator for Numismatics International (NI) meeting with requested starting time of noon. All members, non-members and friends are also invited to the meeting. At this time, there are no speakers for the meeting so if anyone would like to speak on an appropriate subject for about 15-20 minutes and answer questions for about 10-15 minutes, please contact Howard. If no one volunteers to speak, Howard will fill in as usual. Howard will also have a "show and tell" time where everyone will be invited to introduce themselves and speak for a couple of minutes about a coin, note, reference, etc., of interest to them and show it to the attendees.

Coins, notes, MPC, AMC, scrip, tokens, references, etc., are always needed to pass out to the young and new collectors coming to the club table. If anyone wants to donate some of these items, please contact Howard. All donations will be recognized with a donation thank-you letter that can be used to document a tax deduction.



Tierra del Fuego and the Popper Gold Coins

David Nelson Federico Guevara

Introduction

During the “Gold Rush” of the summer of 1885, persistent news of the discovery of rich gold bearing placer deposits reached Buenos Aires, capital of the Republic of Argentina. The reports came from Cabo de las Virgenes which is located on the coast of the Argentine province of Santa Cruz, close to the eastern entrance of the Strait of Magellan. The cape is a famous and majestic location splashed by the stormy waters of the South Atlantic.

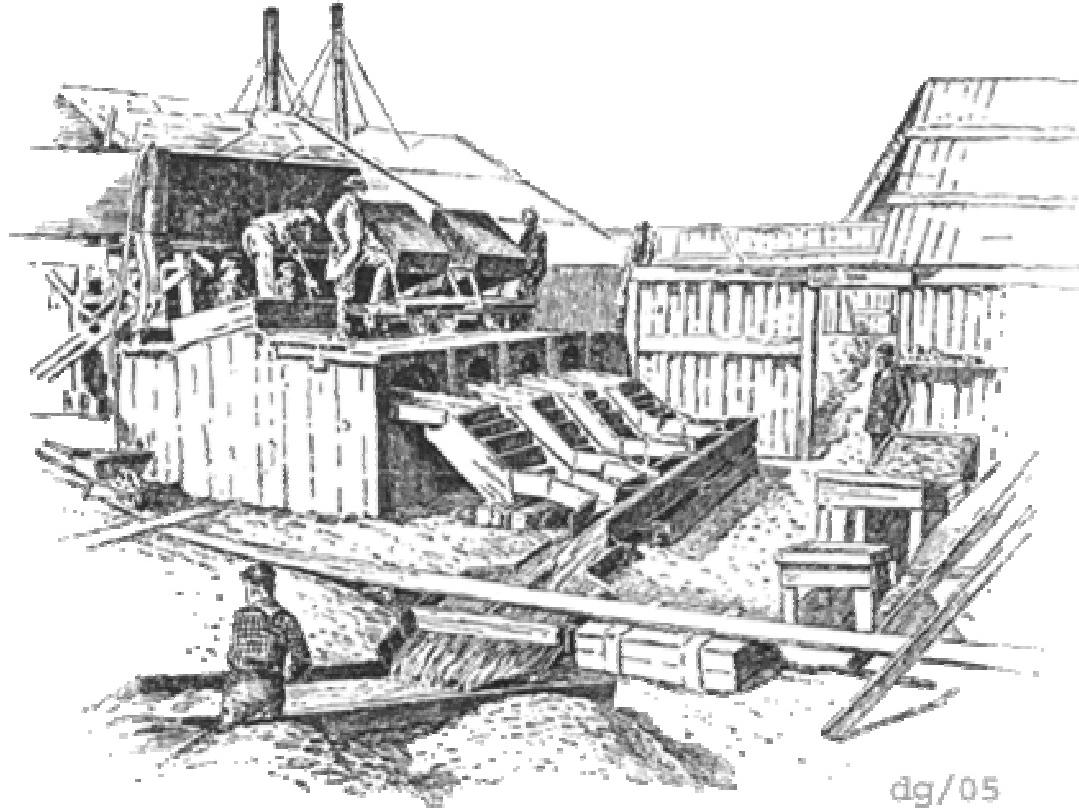


Map Popper expedition 1886

Soon afterwards began one of the most interesting chapters in the history of mining and numismatics in Argentina. The large island of Tierra del Fuego is located on the southern tip of South America, south of the Strait of Magellan. It is divided between the Republic of Chile and the Republic of Argentina at $68^{\circ} 36'$ west latitude with the western part being Chilean and the eastern part Argentinean. The division was agreed according to the boundary treaty of July 23, 1881. In the spring of 1886 the Rumanian explorer and engineer Julio Popper (1857-1893) arrived in this enigmatic island territory.

The 18 men of the Popper expedition were not willing to retreat under any adversity. During its brief but productive stay in Tierra del Fuego, Argentina, the expedition completed intense and tireless explorations and scientific activities.

Popper discovered gold in a desolate, wind-swept maritime region that he appropriately named "El Páramo" (bleak plateau); he applied the same name to the extensive peninsula that surrounds the north tip of Bahía San Sebastián (San Sebastian Bay). It was here in the year 1887 that the legendary mining establishment of the "Compañía Anónima Lavadores de Oro del Sud" (Southern Gold Washers Company), a mining company that had among its partners some very notable citizens of Buenos Aires, reached a production of 500 grams of gold per day.



Gold Washers of "El Páramo"

Once completely established in Tierra del Fuego, Popper began sending gold remittances to the city of Buenos Aires. At the beginning of 1889, he executed one of the boldest actions recorded in the history of Tierra del Fuego, minting his now-famous gold coins of 1 and 5 grams in the improvised "Ceca de El Páramo" (El Páramo mint).

Popper's Gold Coins

This decision to mint gold coins in Tierra del Fuego fits, perhaps, the extravagant personality of the Rumanian explorer, but was also influenced by outside factors caused by geographical isolation from Buenos Aires. The situation was somewhat aggravated by the insufficient money in circulation and because of commercial difficulties in trading gold by weight.

A good and very useful reference for this coinage comes from Popper himself, who submitted his own collection of coins from Tierra del Fuego, along with a brief but descriptive letter dated July 9, 1892, to Don Bartolomé Mitre y Vedia (known as Bartolito), son of the General Bartolomé Mitre.

This letter was written in black ink on a sheet of paper, watermarked "A. Pitier & Son". On the upper left side is the shield of Tierra del Fuego, designed by the explorer himself. The letter is preserved today at the Mitre museum in Buenos Aires, in the collection "Personal Files of Bartolomé Mitre" (shelf No. 8, box No. 15, Document No. 11,884).

Coinage of El Páramo

This descriptive letter to Bartolito, provides revelations of the values and varieties of the different emissions in gold, giving precise details about the first, limited coinage of one and five gram gold coins from El Páramo.

Popper declared that this local coinage suffered countless technical defects owing to the method and manner of its manufacture. The creation of the necessary tools and the coin dies, the engraving, and the rolling and striking of the coins were carried out by Popper himself, accounting for the lack of care taken during production.

It is possible to show that the machinery used for the final coinage of these pieces at El Páramo was a small, rustic flywheel press with some gadgets, trying to copy the Californian system on a limited scale.

In-depth investigations by numismatic scholars about this rustic and curious coinage in Tierra del Fuego have not been able to precisely determine the amount of metal coined at El Páramo, but they estimate it was significant, consisting mostly of the one-gram gold pieces, with the five-gram pieces in small quantities.



Carta de
Julio 29

dg/05

Buenos Aires julio 9 de 1892

Señor Bartolomé Mitre y Vedia

Distinguido señor y amigo.

La falta de comunicaciones regulares entre Tierra del Fuego y la capital de la república y también las constantes fluctuaciones del papel moneda han sido motivo para que las transacciones comerciales en aquel territorio se hagan en "gramos de oro" y la necesidad de evitar los inconvenientes que surgen del manejo de polvo y pepitas de este metal dio lugar a la acumulación de monedas de uno y cinco gramos cuya colección tengo el gusto de remitirle.

Las monedas A y B son de la primera acuñación ya agotada. Su poco esmerada ejecución se explica de la circunstancia que desde el año, el grabado, la laminación y acuñación hasta las mismas herramientas nece-

Popper letter to Bartolomé Mitre y Vedia, 1892, sheet 1

sarias para cada una de las operaciones han sido rechas en el ~~Barrio~~, por el que suscribe, y en un período en que carecía de los elementos más indispensables a semejante clase de trabajos.

Las I y II salen de la Casa de Moneda de esta capital, acuñadas como las precedentes con el oro natural y sin ligar de Tierra del Fuego. - Emisión diez mil gramos. Ley oro 864, plata 132. -

De la moneda E solo han existido seis ejemplares porque a la sexta impresión se despidió ~~el cuarto~~ de la parte que lleva el escudo.

Esperando que estos ejemplares de la modesta numismática fueguina encuentren acogida en la colección de su ilustre señor padre

lo saluda muy atentamente

Un amigo y S. S.

Julio Popper

Popper letter to Bartolomé Mitre y Vedia, 1892, sheet 2

Coinage of Buenos Aires Mint

In his letter, Julio Popper further confirmed the striking of 5 gram and 1 gram pieces at the Buenos Aires mint, identified by the letters "C" and "D" respectively: 10,000 grams of gold, alloy 864 gold, 132 silver. Sharing the hypothesis offered by Héctor C. Janson, keeping in mind the peculiarity of these pieces, it is estimated that 1,000 pieces of 5 grams were minted, type "C" and some 5,000 pieces of 1 gram, style "D", which Janson identifies in his 1998 catalog as "CJ#5" and "CJ#7" respectively.

There are also registers that indicate about 175,000 grams of gold, coming from El Páramo, as melted in the Buenos Aires mint, which lead numismatic investigators to believe that the coinage was larger than initially indicated.

Gold fineness of the Popper coins.

It is proper to highlight that in Popper's letter to Bartolito, he describes the coins from Tierra del Fuego as being made exclusively from native gold without alloy, which fineness was 864 thousandths of gold and 132 thousandths of silver. These data have been corroborated, based on analysis performed on mineral samples coming from El Páramo by the mining company "El Páramo S.R.L.", owner of the mining franchise in the area where Popper carried out his auriferous exploitation.

Classification Popper Series A, B, C, D, and E, 1892

These pieces, examples of the modest numismatic issues from Tierra del Fuego, corresponding to the series catalogued by Popper in the aforementioned letter of 1892, are conserved today as a complete set in the monetary wing of the Mitre museum in Buenos Aires.

This document, without a doubt, helped to establish a simple and practical classification system, easy for the numismatist to remember, as delineated in the following table:

Letter	Gold Weight	Mint
A	5 grams	El Páramo, Tierra del Fuego
B	1 gram	El Páramo, Tierra del Fuego
C	5 grams	Buenos Aires
D	1 gram	Buenos Aires
E	1 gram	Buenos Aires

Other studies have, however, proved the existence of pieces that, without being included in this Popper classification, are considered by numismatic experts as genuine, and open new possibilities and lines of investigation.

An example of these possibilities was the trial strike of the one gram in bronze, included by the prestigious Argentinean numismatist Sr. Hector Carlos Janson, under the number CJ21, in the 1998 edition of his Catalog La Moneda Circulante en el Territorio Argentino, 1767 – 1998 (section “Ensayos Provinciales,” page 292).

Since the mentioned publication, the collecting world has reported the existence of some six specimens in gold, which allowed a new classification under the number CJ 23.1: this is very similar to type D, but the inscription on the obverse and reverse are separated by two points.



Description of the Numismatic Pieces: Farini 1953/1979

The following description of these curious numismatic pieces is part of the important work, “La Moneda de Tierra del Fuego,” by Sr. Juan Angel Farini, published in the magazine of the Mitre Museum (No. 6, page 57: Buenos Aires 1957) and re-edited in the prestigious Cuaderno de Numismática y Ciencias Históricas (Tomo VI, Buenos Aires, Agosto 1979, N° 22), under the direction of Lic. Arnaldo J. Cunietti-Ferrando.

Description of the El Páramo pieces.

TYPE A:

Obverse: Legend, in circle and between two five pointed stars: TIERRA DEL FUEGO; at bottom, 1889. In the field inside the circle and on top of grains or traces of mineral, banner with the inscription: POPPER. Reverse: Legend in circle: LAVADERO DE ORO DEL SUD. In the field, inside the circle and on top of grains of mineral, banner interlaced with a 5, with an inscription: GRAMOS. Milled rim, reeded edge. Diameter 17.5 mm, mass 5 grams.



TYPE B:

Obverse: Legend, in circle and between two five pointed stars: TIERRA DEL FUEGO; at bottom, 1889. In the field inside the circle and on top of grains or traces of mineral, banner with the inscription: POPPER. Reverse: Legend in circle and between two stars of five peaks: EL PÁRAMO; at bottom, UN GRAMO. In the field, inside the circle and on top of grains of mineral, crossed pick and hammer (maza). Milled rim, reeded edge. Diameter 12.5 mm, mass 1 gram.



Description of the Buenos Aires mint pieces.

TYPE C:

Obverse: Inscription in circle: TIERRA DEL FUEGO 1889. In the field, inside the circle and on top of grains of mineral, crossed pick and hammer, banner with the inscription "POPPER". Reverse: Legend in circle and between two dots: LAVADEROS DE ORO, at bottom DEL SUD. In the field, inside a circle and grains of mineral, banner interlaced with a 5 with the inscription GRAMOS. Closing the circle of the field: AU864 – AG132 Milled rim, reeded edge. Diameter 18.5 mm, mass 5 grams.



TYPE D:

Obverse: Legend in circle: TIERRA DEL FUEGO 1889. In the field, inside a circle and on top of grains of mineral banner with the inscription: POPPER. Reverse: Legend in circle: EL PÁRAMO UN GRAMO. In the field, inside the circle and on top of grains of mineral, crossed pick and hammer, tied by ribbon. Beneath tools, following the curve of the field: AU864 – AG132. Milled rim, reeded edge. Diameter 13.0 mm, mass 1 gram.



TYPE E:

With respect to the coin that Popper classifies as Type E, we can say there are only 6 pieces, because on the sixth strike in the Buenos Aires mint, the devices on the die were destroyed. One of these rarities of Argentine numismatics is located in the monetary wing of the Mitre museum. It is similar to Type D already described but Type E has some particular features that make it different, distinguished as follows:

1. The alloy legend, AU864 – AG132, touches the circle in the field.
2. The letters in the legend are smaller.
3. The pick and hammer are larger.
4. The ribbon tying the pick and hammer is larger.

5. The pick coincides with the letters EL of EL PÁRAMO and the hammer coincides with MO of PÁRAMO. On type D, the pick coincides with PA of PÁRAMO and the hammer with the second A of PÁRAMO.

Comparison of the pieces according to Farini classification

According to the following criteria, as per the above descriptions by Sr. Juan Manuel Farini, the two mintages, one at “El Páramo”, Tierra del Fuego, and the other at Buenos Aires, are distinguished one from the other by comparing type A to C and type B to D, the pieces of 5 and 1 grams respectively.

- a) Obverse of type A, the legend TIERRA DEL FUEGO, is located between two five pointed stars and closing the legend with the year 1889. On type C this legend does not have a star.
- b) Reverse type A, the legend LAVADERO DE ORO DEL SUD, does not have stars or dots. On type C the legend LAVADERO DE ORO, between two dots and ending the legend with DEL SUD.

The difference between type B and D, can be summarized as:

- a) Obverse of type B: the legend TIERRA DEL FUEGO is located between two stars and closing the legend with the year 1889. On type D the legend TIERRA DEL FUEGO 1889 appears without stars or dots.
- b) Reverse of type B: the legend EL PÁRAMO is located between two stars. Closing the legend with UN GRAMO. On type D the legend EL PÁRAMO UN GRAMO appears without stars or dots. Also the pick and the hammer bound together with a ribbon.

Guevara classification of the Popper dies, 2002.

Regarding dies made for the Popper gold coins, there are only six extant, and they are kept in two important museums in the Republic of Argentina. Four are found in the *Museo del Fin del Mundo*, Ushuaia, a gift from the well known settler Mr. Carlos Rubinos. The remaining two dies are in the *Museo del Banco de la Nación Argentina*, Buenos Aires, acquired from Mr. Jorge Enriquez.

After careful comparative study the author developed a descriptive table in 2002, the first catalog of dies used for the Popper coins.

The table associates the dies classified by Guevara using codes DG #1.1 / DG#1.2 to DG#8.1/DG#8.2, with earlier classifications the of coins as catalogued by:

- 1) Julio Popper in his signed letter of the year 1892 to Bartolomé Mitre y Vedia (Bartolito).
- 2) Hector Carlos Janson in his catalogue “*La Moneda Circulante en el Territorio Argentino 1767–1998*”, 1998 edition.
- 3) Juan Angel Farini in his work “*La Moneda de Tierra del Fuego*”, 1953 / 1979.

dg/05



Buenos Aires mint die for "UN GRAMO"



El Páramo die for "5 GRAMOS"

Guevara Classification of the Popper Dies, 2002

Popper 1892 Type	H. C. Janson 1998	J. A. Fariní 1953/79	Gold Wt grams	Mint of 1889 Striking	Guevara Die No.		Die in Museum
					Obverse	Reverse	
					Die still exists?		
A	CJ#2 type II	A	5	El Páramo Tierra del Fuego	DG#1.1 No	DG#1.2 No	No
B	CJ#3.1 type I	B	1	El Páramo Tierra del Fuego	DG#2.1 No	DG#2.2 Yes	Museo BNA Buenos Aires
No Classif.	CJ#1 type I	No Classif.	5	El Páramo Tierra del Fuego	DG#3.1 Yes	DG#3.2 Yes	Museo Fin del Mundo Ushuaia
C	CJ#5	C	5	Casa de Moneda Buenos Aires	DG#4.1 No	DG#4.2 Yes	Museo BNA Buenos Aires
D	CJ#7	D	1	Casa de Moneda Buenos Aires	DG#5.1 Yes	DG#5.2 Yes	Museo Fin del Mundo Ushuaia
E	CJ#6	E	1	Casa de Moneda Buenos Aires	DG#6.1 No	DG#6.2 No	No
No Classif.	CJ#4 type II	No Classif.	1	El Páramo Tierra del Fuego	DG#7.1 No	DG#7.2 No	No
No Classif.	Cu CJ#21 Au CJ#23.1	Ag Classif. Trial Strikes Au/Cu	1	Casa de Moneda Buenos Aires	DG#8.1 No	DG#8.2 No	No

Author's description of the 1994 reproductions, 1 gram gold coins, Series I & II

The association HANIS (Historia, Antropología y Naturaleza de las Islas del Sud y Antártida / *History, Anthropology and Nature of the Southern Isles and Antarctic*), in its capacity of consulting and cooperation with the Museo del Fin del Mundo (Territorial law No. 621/79), made a limited reproduction of the 1 gram Popper coins. The purpose was to fund the museum.

The very delicate task of making the dies for Series I was initially given to the company Auro Sur S.A. This is according to an interview of the president of HANIS, Escribano Ignacio Jorda, published in the newspaper El Sureño of Rio Grande, Tierra del Fuego, in its Sunday edition, November 11, 1994, page 16, under the title "Se Reproducirá la Moneda de Popper" (Popper Coins to be Reproduced).

A limited number of these rare Popper reproductions were sold in the aforementioned museum, each with a certificate of authenticity (of reproduction). They are very suspect in the numismatic world because of similarity to original pieces — so much so that H.C. Janson in his 1998 catalog, without classifying them as trial strikes, cautioned collectors about a possible newly cut die which could produce coins resembling those from the Buenos Aires mint, the coins detectable only by the color of the gold.

The reproductions of Series I, correspond with the obverse and reverse of the original 1 gram gold coin from Buenos Aires, classification Popper type D, H.C. Janson CJ#7, J.A. Farini type D, and with the existent dies in the Museo del Fin de Mundo, Ushuaia, classification DNF Guevara DG#5.1 and DG#5.2.

The weight of the Series I piece is 3.122 grams. The central design has a diameter of 13mm, outside of which is the legend "USHUAIA" and "Au 900/000"; the overall diameter of the piece is 17mm.

Another 100 replicas, constituting Series II, were produced by the *Casa Gra-Med de Marta Silvia Rey*, Buenos Aires (Gra-Med is abbreviation of Grabados and Medallas, in English, Engravings and Medals). The dies used for this series are kept at the Museo del Fin del Mundo, Ushuaia. They have a weight of 1.65 grams, the outside diameter is 21 mm and central design 16 mm, forming an outer ring with the following inscription: "USHUAIA" and "Au 900/000".

Finally we can add that currently (December 2005) the Series II reproductions are sold out and Series III with an issue of 100 pieces are being sold by HANIS at the Museo del Fin del Mundo. Series II and III have the same specifications.



Series I
Reproductions
Enlarged x1.5





Series III
Reproductions
Enlarged x1.5



Popper's Death, 1893

Four years after his bold decision to make gold coins in Tierra del Fuego, and one month after the signing of the additional and clarifying protocol of the 1881 Border Treaty between Argentina and Chile, Popper died mysteriously on the 6th of June, 1893 in Buenos Aires. His mortal remains were buried in the vault belonging to the Ayenza family, at the aristocratic cemetery of La Recoleta.

The passion that Popper had for the Republic of Argentina, and basically for Tierra del Fuego, has over the last 100 years been ever-present and overpowering in El Páramo, validating his admiration in the collective memory of the society of Tierra del Fuego, in spite of the controversies and polemics that this historic personage generates among the historians and local investigators.

As a corollary to his bold, brief and outstanding action in the Argentinean territory, emerges a warning regarding the fate of numismatic and gold-mining endeavors in Tierra del Fuego. A paragraph from a letter that was written on June 9, 1893 by the Argentinean journalist Jose Manuel Eizaguirre to Dr. Lucio V. Lopez, reads:

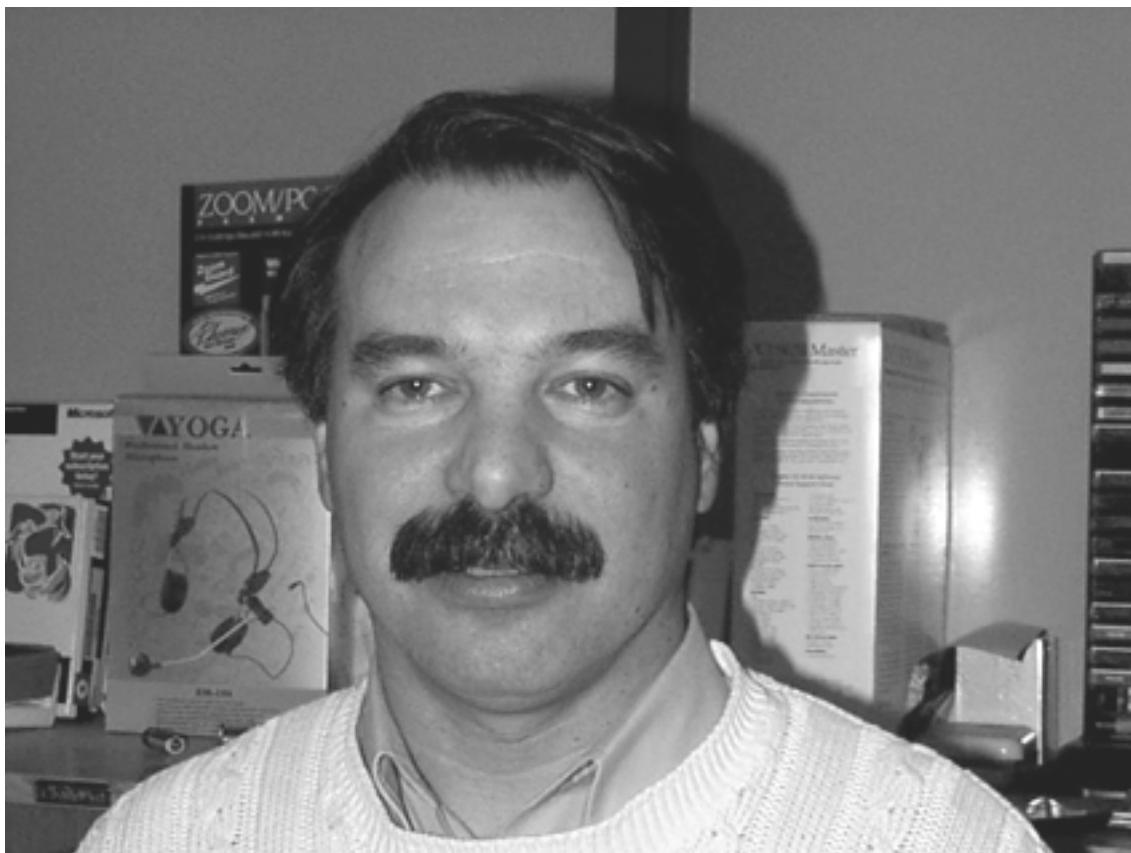
From my humble viewpoint I also believe that his violent fall will for a long time stop the impulse of big enterprises and noble initiatives. But his deeds remain well marked and the name of Popper will not die as long as the crashing waters of the Atlantic keep thundering in front of the settlement that he founded in Tierra del Fuego, baptizing it with the name most suitable for the character of lonely places, 'El Páramo.'

Sources consulted for this article.

- Juan Ángel Fariní, Museo Mitre, Buenos Aires
- Héctor Carlos Janson, Wheelwright, Santa Fe, Argentina.
- Emilio Paoletti, Buenos Aires
- Carlos Mayer, Buenos Aires
- Arnaldo J. Cunietti-Ferrando, Buenos Aires
- María Angélica Gowland, Museo Mitre, Buenos Aires
- Juan Gómez, Temperley, Buenos Aires
- Daniel Buck, Washington, USA

John R. Spears, USA, 1895
Santiago Reyes, Museo del Fin del Mundo, Ushuaia, Tierra del Fuego,
Argentina.
Oscar Zanola, Ushuaia, Tierra del Fuego, Argentina.
Carlos Rubinos, Ushuaia, Tierra del Fuego, Argentina.
Jorge Villar, Buenos Aires
Dick Hanscom, Fairbanks, Alaska, USA
Marta Silvia Rey, Gra-Med, Buenos Aires
Boleslao Lewin, Buenos Aires

The Author



David Nelson Federico Guevara

Partner and technical manager of the mining company “El Páramo S.R.L”, a local mining company dedicating over 14 years to the mining exploration in the territory of Tierra del Fuego. Sr. Guevara, 52, has lived more than 20 years in the Province of Tierra del Fuego, Antarctica, and South Atlantic Islands, Argentina.

He actively participates in mining, historical and numismatic conferences, is a well published author on issues regarding Tierra del Fuego and of a literary work not yet published, "The History of Gold in Tierra del Fuego, Argentina". He maintains a website at URL:

<http://historiatdf.netcombssb.com.ar>

Transcription of Popper letter.

Buenos Aires Julio 9 de 1892

Señor Bartolomé Mitre y Vedia

Distinguido señor y amigo.

La falta de comunicaciones regulares entre Tierra de Fuego y la capital de la república y también las constantes fluctuaciones del papel moneda han sido motivo para que las transacciones comerciales en aquel territorio se hagan en “gramos de oro” y la necesidad de evitar los inconvenientes que surgen del manejo de polvo y pepitas de este metal dió lugar á la acuñación de monedas de uno y cinco gramos cuya colección tengo el gusto de reunirle.

Las monedas A y B son de la primera acuñación ya agotada. La poca esmerada ejecución se explica de la circunstancia que desde el cuño, el grabado, la laminación y acuñación hasta las mismas herramientas necesarias para cada una de las operaciones han sido hechas en el Páramo, por el que suscribe, y en un período en que carecía de los elementos mas indispensables á semejante clase de trabajos.

Las C y D salen de la Casa de Moneda de esta capital, acuñadas como las precedentes con el oro natural y sin liga de Tierra del Fuego. – Emisión diez mil gramos. Ley oro 864, plata 132. –

De la moneda E solo han existido seis ejemplares porque á la sexta impresión se despedazó el cuño de la parte que lleva el emblema.

Esperando que estas especímenes de la modesta numismática fueguina encuentren acogida en la colección de su ilustre señor padre.

lo saluda muy atentamente
su amigo y S.S.

Julio Popper

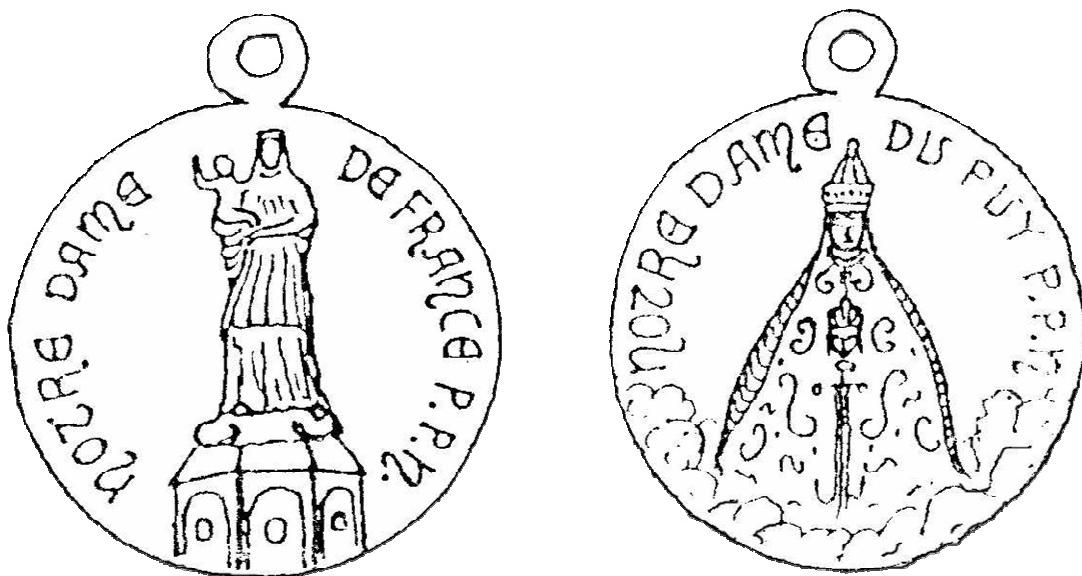
NI

Le Puy

Bob Forrest NI #2382

The town of Le Puy is grouped around three gigantic rocky outcrops, remnants of a distant volcanic past. There is something in the human psyche which connects such geological curiosities with the gods and drives men to build altars and temples on and around them. At Le Puy, it would appear, these volcanic outcrops prompted first the Druids, then the Romans, and finally the Christians to succumb to this temptation, the result of which is that today the cathedral of Le Puy stands atop one rocky outcrop; a huge statue of the Virgin Mary (Notre Dame de France) stands atop the second; and the chapel of St. Michel d'Aiguilhe (St. Michael of the Needle) stands atop the truly dizzying and precipitous cone of rock that is the third. Le Puy has been a prominent place of pilgrimage since at least the sixth century, and was the starting point of one of the key pilgrim routes through France leading to Santiago de Compostela in Spain.

The white metal medal shown here enlarged (actual size approximately 28 mm) depicts, on the obverse, the 55 feet tall statue of Notre Dame de France. It was erected between 1855 and 1860, in gratitude for victory at the siege of Sebastopol, and was made from the metal of 213 cannons seized following that victory. The obverse legend reads NOTRE DAME DE FRANCE P.P.N. (= Our Lady of France, pray for us.)



The reverse of the medal shows the statue of Notre Dame du Puy, which resides in the cathedral, above the high altar. The accompanying legend reads NOTRE DAME DU PUY P.P.N. (= Our Lady of Le Puy, pray for us.) The original statue was a 27 inches tall cedar-wood "Black Madonna" donated to the cathedral by St. Louis of France in 1254. This statue had a curious history attached to it. Louis - as King Louis IX of France - had spent some time as the captive of the Sultan of Egypt. But captive or not, the Sultan had great respect for him, and as a result allowed him to choose any one object from the royal treasury that caught his fancy. Louis chose the statue later to be known as Notre Dame du Puy, a statue that is said to have been venerated by the Moslems as it was believed to have been carved by the prophet Jeremiah (held in

high regard by Moslems as well as Christians) in anticipation of the coming of the Virgin Mary and her Son. The statue represented the Virgin as seated on a kind of stool, holding the infant Jesus on her knees. One of its most curious features was the studded helmet-like crown worn by the Virgin. On the medal the statue is depicted as robed - hence its conical appearance - though it should be noted that the present-day statue here depicted is not the original, for that, like so many others, was burnt in the French Revolution. The present statue is a copy made in the early 19th century.

The illustrated medal appears to be a modern, later 20th century, pilgrim/tourist souvenir, and one which is fairly common.

Sources.

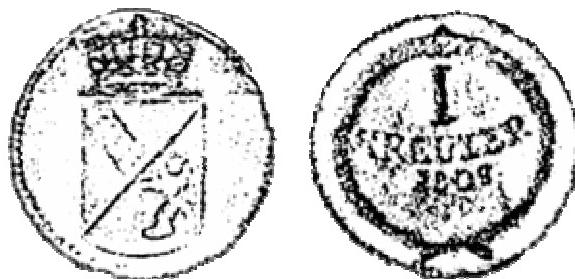
For a good account of Le Puy see H.M.Gillett, *Famous Shrines of Our Lady* (1952), vol.1, pp.83-90. Many tourist and travel guides give good descriptions of the geological layout of Le Puy and its shrines. See, for example, Ralph Dutton & Lord Holden *The Land of France* (1939), pp.96-7, which contains a particularly impressive photo of the chapel of St. Michael perched on its precipitous cone of rock. Useful web-sites are www.ot-lepuyenvelay.fr and www.mairie-le-puy-en-velay.fr, both available on internet 23 November 2005.

NI

Die Varieties Baden and the Netherlands Mike Davis NI #2392

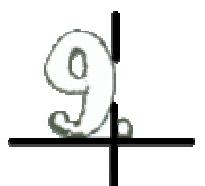
Baden, 1 kreuzer, 1808, KM141 and KM147

This variety has an obverse similar to KM141, except that the crown is smaller as on KM147. The reverse is similar to that of KM147, except that the tassels at the bottom of the wreath are farther apart. This seems to have come about as a result of the transition from KM141 to KM147.

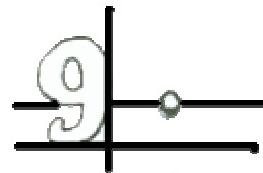


Netherlands, 10 cents, 1849, KM75 with dot

These varieties involve the positioning of the dot after the date. On the first variety, which I will call "near dot", the dot is in line horizontally with the bottom of the "9" and in line vertically with the right edge of the "9". The second variety, "far dot" has the dot in line horizontally with the middle of the "9", and vertically about half of the width of the "9" to the right.



NEAR DOT



FAR DOT

NI

A Buddhist Temple Charm? Gordon Jarman NI #LM133

In the August 1999 issue of this Bulletin Bob Forrest had an article titled "A Curiosity from China." His diagram illustrated a three dimensional humanoid figure standing on the edge of a Chinese amulet. After exploring his theory that said figure might be the Chinese thunder god, Bob added a goodly measure of Brit-wit to his article and presented the question to the NI membership. I have unearthed two articles that briefly mention this item:

"The Weird and Wondrous Coins of Vietnam" by John A. Novak in *Coins Magazine*, July 1965 issue.

"One of these, (fetish coins) supposedly made in the late 18th century, (sic) is really quite bizarre... Squatting over a cash-piece inscribed with Yin-Yang symbols is an ungainly three dimensional devil. This is the first example I'd ever seen of a full-figure coin, and the first oriental cash-piece to have even a semi-human represented in any way."

The second article appeared in issue 54 (September 1968) of *Cash on the Line (COTL)*. This was the journal of The International Coin Club of Okinawa. It was edited and published by John A. Novak in the 1960s. In an article titled "Coins for the Tourist Trade" Novak wrote of the many copies of coins and amulets that were being offered to U.S. military personnel serving in South Vietnam. He worried that these copies, which were being sold as cheap souvenirs in Vietnam, would become accepted as genuine once they reached the western world. Novak includes his "devil coin" as one of the "FETISH COINS supposedly of the Minh Mang era (AD 1820-

1840)... They may have been Buddhist temple charms, but the ones currently for sale are recent castings from old originals".

In both articles the photos of the item in question closely resemble Bob Forrest's Chinese curiosity. I myself bought a similar piece from a Baltimore dealer for the princely sum of \$2.50. No doubt, most if not all of the extant examples of this amulet are copies or, worse yet, fantasy pieces. However, Sergeant Novak has left the door open just a crack to the possibility that the person(s) who first made this mysterious item were driven by something other than the profit motive. As I know next to nothing about Buddhist charms, I will stop here and heed the old truism which states that the less we know about something the more we write about it.

NI

Member Notices

VIET NAM WANTED. 1 Hao, 2 Hao, 5 Hao and 1 Dong Silver (not the issued aluminum) 1976-dated coins. They are non-circulating legal tender collector coins that were sold in boxed sets and individually. I would like to purchase the set and the individual pieces. The individual pieces might have also been boxed and I would like the boxes and any paperwork with them too. If you have one or more of these pieces or even know where they are located in a collection or dealer's stock, please contact me, Howard A. Daniel III, at HADANIEL3@MSN.COM or at P.O. Box 989, Deltaville, VA 23043-0989.

Wanted. Australia KM-36 1d 1942(b) without I in VF or better. Will purchase or trade. Have a ten page listing for sale or trade. Please contact if you have one available. William F. (Bill) Orne, 4559 Juniper Place, Evans, GA 30809-4534, wforne@knology.net

Albert L. Gammon, P.O. Box 1343, Sun City, AZ 85372: New 10 page world coin list includes crowns, minors, proof/mint sets, bank notes, tokens, medals and some publications. Stamp appreciated.

Albert L. Gammon, P.O. Box 1343, Sun City, AZ 85372: 12 different 2005 2 Zloty coins BU including Pope John II. SASE for complete Poland list.

Gallery Numis (Tom Galway), P.O. Box 620421, Middleton, WI 53562-0421: Price list 24 with coins from many different countries, 1600s to present. There is a very nice group of larger copper coins with emphasis on the struck cash coins of China.

For sale, collection of United Nations, un-addressed First Day Covers from the years 1951-62, each with a cachet related to the stamp mounted on White Ace album pages. This collection also contains United Nations stamps from the 1960's and includes regular and airmail issues as well as postal cards. Will trade for foreign coins or silver rounds. R.W. Richter, tel: + (1) 972 596 8765 or write to 2220 Coit Rd, Suite 480-105, Plano, TX 75075, USA.

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